Pear Sawfly or Pearslug

Scientific Name: Caliroa cerasi

Hosts: Pear, cherry, plum, quince, apple, cotoneaster, mountain-ash

Damage/symptoms: They are not actually true "slugs" but are closely related to a wasp. The damage is quite distinctive, showing a skeletonizing effect on the leaf surface. They can cause browning of the leaves, premature leaf drop, and reduced fruit size/production the following season.



Figure 1. Pearslug larvae on leaf. Photo by J. Payne, Bugwood.org.



Figure 2. Pearslug damage on peach leaf.

Life cycle: Adults emerge in late June to July. Females lay eggs on the upper surface of the leaves. The larvae feed on the upper leaf and drop to the soil to pupate. A second generation of adults emerge within a couple of weeks. The second generation can often be more damaging to the leaf tissue.

Management: Pearslugs can be washed off with vigorous jets of water. Wood ash or dirt thrown on the slugs will help to dry them out and kill them. There are several contact insecticides labeled for chemical control including horticultural oil, neem oil, or a product with the active ingredient spinosad (products such as Captain Jack's, Monterey Garden Insect Spray), carbaryl (products such as Sevin), or malathion.



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Disclaimer: These recommendations are provided only as a guide. It is always the pesticide applicator's responsibility, by law, to read and follow all current label directions for the specific pesticide being used. Due to constantly changing labels and product registration, some of the recommendations given in this writing may no longer be legal by the time you read them. If any information in these recommendations disagrees with the label, the recommendation must be disregarded. No endorsement is intended for products mentioned. The authors and Montana State University assume no liability resulting from the use of these recommendations.